

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING REGULATIONS FOR NEXT FALL PROPOSED

Preliminary hunting regulations for ducks, geese, and other migratory game birds for the 1979-80 hunting season have been proposed by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The proposals, published in the February 15, 1979, Federal Register, describe tentative season frameworks, daily bag and possession limits, and shooting hours for migratory game birds in the contiguous United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Species discussed in the proposals include ducks, geese, brant, and swans; doves and pigeons; cranes; rails, coots, and gallinules; and woodcock and snipe.

No major changes from last year's hunting regulations are proposed at this time. Shooting hours will remain from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. Framework dates for ducks and geese will be from October 1, 1979, to January 20, 1980, for the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways and from September 29, 1979, through January 20, 1980, for the Central and Pacific Flyways.

To make it easier for disabled sportsmen to hunt, the Service has proposed to allow paraplegics and single and double amputees of the legs to hunt from stationary motor vehicles or other motor-driven land conveyances, the use of which are prohibited at present.

The Service is consulting with Washington, Oregon, and California about the desirability of changing hunting regulations for band-tailed

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pigeons to protect populations that may be declining. No final decisions will be made until additional information is obtained.

All of the published proposals are subject to changes later if indicated by information obtained from surveys, State fish and wildlife agencies, and the public. Public comments on the proposals are invited through May 16, 1979, and should be addressed to the Director (FWS/MBMO), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

To ensure that the public has ample opportunity to comment on the proposals, two public hearings will be held to review the status of migratory game birds and consider proposed hunting regulations. The first hearing will pertain to early season regulations (seasons opening before September 29) and will be held on June 21 at 9 a.m. in the Auditorium of the Department of the Interior Building, on C Street between 18th and 19th Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C. A second hearing on regulations for seasons opening on or after September 29 will be held on August 2 at 9 a.m. in the Auditorium of the General Services Administration Building, F Street between 18th and 19th Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C. Persons wishing to participate in these hearings should write to the Director (FWS/MBMO), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240, or telephone 202/254-3207. Those wishing to make statements should file copies with the Director before or during each hearing.

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